



ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

A PEOPLE LOOKING FORWARD

**ACTION FOR
ACCESS AND
PARTNERSHIPS
IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

INTERIM REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT
AND THE NATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
JANUARY 2001

PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMISSION ON
ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS



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This Interim Report to the President of the United States is submitted by the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders which is composed of fourteen private and non-profit sectors members, as well as community members working at the local and state government levels who have experience in issues and matters of concern to the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. The Commission was established by Executive Order 13125 to advise the President through the Secretary of Health and Human Services on (1) ways to improve the quality of life of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders through increased participation in federal programs where they may be underserved; (2) ways to increase public-sector, private-sector, and community involvement in improving the health and well-being of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; and (3) ways to foster research and data on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The report's findings and recommendations solely reflect the views of the Commission with the exception of Appendix E. Appendix E consists of Summaries of Federal Department and Agency Snapshots, Inventories and Fiscal Year 2001 Plans, which were submitted by the respective agencies in response to a request for information made by the Commission.

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ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

In this Interim Report to the President of the United States, the first President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders proudly asserts our collective place and our communities' role in the life and future of our country. We do so on behalf of the nearly 11 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders residing in the United States and the U.S.-associated Pacific Island jurisdictions. We also do so on behalf of the more than 120,000 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who have dedicated their lives to public service as employees of the federal government. Together with our allies and supporters, we are committed to shaping a positive future for our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and all of America.



President Clinton and the first Chair of the Commission and Secretary of Commerce, Norman Y. Mineta



Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala swears in the members of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

THE WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

President Clinton issued Executive Order 13125 and established the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and this President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The goal of the Executive Order is to improve the quality of life of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by increasing their participation in federal government programs where they may be underserved. Under Executive Order 13125, we, the members of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, have been appointed to advise the President, through the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services on: the development, monitoring and coordination of federal government efforts to improve the quality of life of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders through increased participation in federal programs where they may be underserved and through the collection of data related to Asian American and Pacific Islander populations and subpopulations; ways to increase public sector, private sector and community involvement in the health and well-being of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; and ways to foster research and data on public health as related to Asian American and Pacific Islander populations and subpopulations. We are deeply honored by the trust placed in us by the President, the Secretary and our communities to serve on this pioneering Commission.

ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS ARE A DIVERSE AND RAPIDLY GROWING PART OF AMERICA

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are a diverse and rapidly growing U.S. population with an estimated 10.9 million persons (4.0%) as of July 1999. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders remain the fastest growing racial/ethnic population in the U.S., increasing 95% from 1980 to 1990 and another 43% from 1990 to July 1999. Although 80% of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders reside in ten states (California, New York, Hawai'i, Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, Washington, Florida, Virginia and Massachusetts), the fastest growing Asian American and Pacific Islander populations are in Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina, Nebraska, Arizona, Delaware and New Mexico. The Asian American and Pacific Islander population is expected to reach 37.6 million persons, or comprise 9% of the U.S. population, by the year 2050. In 1999, 29% of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were under age 18 and 7% were age 65 and older. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).



Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders come from nearly fifty countries and ethnic groups, each with distinct cultures, traditions and histories. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are indigenous people from the Pacific, immigrants and refugees from Asia, and their descendents, many of whom have been in America for gen-

erations. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders speak over one hundred Asian and Pacific Islander languages and dialects. According to the 1990 Census, approximately 35% of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders live in linguistically-isolated households, in which none of the individuals aged 14 years or older speak English "very well." Sixty-one percent of Hmong American households, 56% of Cambodian American households, 52% of Laotian American households, 44% of Vietnamese American households, 41% of Korean American households and 40% of Chinese American households are linguistically-isolated. As of 1997, 60% of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. were born outside the U.S. However, of foreign-born Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, the median length of residence in the U.S. is 11.6 years and nearly half (44%) have become U.S. citizens. (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders can be found at the extreme spectrums of almost every socioeconomic indicator: from wealth to poverty, from advanced education to illiteracy, from entrepreneurial success to marginal daily survival. For example, while Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in 1998 continued to have the highest median household incomes among the nation's racial groups, the median income for household members was lower than non-Hispanic Whites because Asian American and Pacific Islander households tend to be larger, with more income earners. Additionally, 1.4 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, or 13% of the population, were living at or below the federal poverty level in 1998. Asian American and Pacific Islander families are about twice as likely as non-Hispanic White families to live in poverty. (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).

While 70% of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders ages 18 to 21 attended college in 1998, a lower proportion of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were high school graduates compared with non-Hispanic Whites. Finally, half of Asian American and Pacific Islander households were homeowners in 1998. (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).



President Clinton signs Executive Order 13125.

This White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders seeks to highlight both the tremendous unmet needs in the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities as well as the dynamic community assets that can be leveraged to meet many of those needs. Ensuring access to increase participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in federal government programs and services, by working in close partnership with Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, will achieve the goal of this Initiative.

A CONTEXT FOR UNDERSTANDING THE ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITIES

Given the diversity and polarized sociodemographic characteristics of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, the Commission has identified four themes to provide a context for the White House Initiative:

- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have been "MIH" - "Missing In History" - as taught in classrooms, as reflected in the media and the arts, and as understood by government policymakers and program planners. In much of the data used by the federal government, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are invisible, relegated to a residual category of "Other." Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are challenged to reclaim and re-insert their history, their stories, their faces, their voices and their lives into American history and America's future.

- Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders often remain a footnote or asterisk as part of the broad "Asian American and Pacific Islander" category, ignoring their importance and dignity as diverse, indigenous peoples. Barely ever noted is the manner in which the United States acquired Hawai'i, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

Some have referred to your community as a so-called "model minority." But that label, like any one, while it has its truths and strengths, masks the rich diversity and the diversity of challenges and disparities we find within the Asian Pacific American community. For example, cervical cancer rates among Vietnamese women are nearly five times higher than those for white women. Why is that, and what can we do about it? Over half of South Asian Americans have earned a bachelor's degree, but less than 6% of Cambodian and Laotian Americans have completed college. Why is that, and what can we do about it? Despite the strong economy, almost half of all Cambodian Americans, and two out of three Hmong Americans live in poverty. Why is that, and what are we going to do about it?

President Clinton, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Event at the White House, May 25, 2000.

...the widely accepted terms, "Asian Pacific Americans" and "Asian-Pacific Islanders," conflate two distinct pan-ethnic groups, to the continuing disadvantage of Pacific Islanders whose histories, ongoing struggles for sovereignty, and political futures diverge significantly from those of Asian Americans. The experiences of hitting the "glass ceiling", being targeted for hate crimes, and being stereotyped as a model minority are particular forms of racism directed at Asian Americans. Issues affecting Pacific Islanders differ greatly. For example, nationally, Pacific Islander communities are enduring many forms of violence – but not through hate crimes. For Samoans and Tongans, this violence encompasses police brutality spawned by being racialized as physically threatening gangsters. In another example, violence against Hawaiians is often part of land evictions and sovereignty demonstrations – not from racist xenophobia as directed against Asian Americans. Samoans, for example, are rarely figured as "model minorities"; Hawaiians are never figured as "foreigners" or "aliens"; and Chamorros are rarely figured outside of American citizenship. We need to uncouple "Asian" and "Pacific" in order to examine these concerns. This "Asian Pacific" collapse often renders Pacific Islander peoples invisible...

*J. Kehaulani Kauanui,
Wesleyan University,
at Eastern Regional Town Hall,
September 18, 2000.*



*Filipino American World War II veterans at Western
Region Town Hall*

- Asian Americans are stereotyped as a "model minority": passive, compliant, overachieving and without problems or needs.
- Asian Americans continue to be viewed as perpetual foreigners, forever "aliens" whose loyalty and place in America is always questioned. The focus on Asian Americans for violations of campaign finance laws after the 1996 presidential campaign and

the investigation and criminal prosecution of nuclear scientist Dr. Wen Ho Lee are cited as the most recent examples of such stereotyping. Until Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are viewed and accepted as an integral part of America, continued exclusion and discrimination will occur.

Throughout this Interim Report, in our findings and recommendations we will continue to highlight these four themes. However, we caution against replacing common stereotypes about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders – whether positive or negative – with different or new stereotypes. The Asian American and Pacific Islander communities are extremely diverse and complex, with

...one of the greatest stories that has yet to be told is just how much Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are an integral part of this nation. The fact is that the history of Asians in America is closely intertwined with the deepest parts of America. In 1806, England outlawed slavery - at least they did on paper; and it was that very same year that the slave traders rerouted their vessels from Africa to Asia, to begin bringing over Asian coolies from China, Japan and India, to be indentured laborers in the Americas. How much more linked can we be in our nation's history and psyche? Yet this knowledge is MIH - Missing in History.

We know that prominent African Americans spoke up against the exclusion of Chinese and other Asian Americans from California in the 1800s. And some Black leaders in Los Angeles argued that the internment of Japanese Americans in World War II was wrong. At the same time, it was Japanese American GIs who liberated Jewish Holocaust survivors from the Nazi death camps. Yet this information is MIH - Missing in History.

Asian Americans were active participants in the civil rights movement - there is the famous photo of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King during one of the Freedom Marches in the 1960s, where he is wearing a flower lei, brought to him by marchers from Hawai'i. The person who cradled Malcolm X as he lay dying was the renowned Japanese American activist Yuri Kochiyama, a long-time Harlem resident and friend of the African American leader. Many other Asian Americans have been part of the social justice movements in America. Yet this knowledge is MIH - Missing in History.

In California, Mexican Americans and Filipino American farm workers toiled side-by-side in the fields, and together, initiated the great grape boycott led by Cesar Chavez. In 1992, some 30,000 Korean Americans marched in Los Angeles to protest the police brutality against Rodney King - it was the largest demonstration by Asian Americans on the mainland in U.S. history. When Japanese Americans won an apology and redress from the U.S. government in 1988 for their incarceration during World War II, they were successful because they had the help of white and black Americans, of Hispanic and Native Americans, from women's groups and gay and lesbian organizations, and Christian and Jewish religious groups. The stories of all our communities are truly inseparable from one another - yet this knowledge is MIH - Missing in History.

*Helen Zia,
Author and Journalist,
at Western and Eastern Regional Town Halls,
July 24 and September 18, 2000.*

socioeconomic and other indicators that span the spectrum of both achievements and continuing needs. Data about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, when available at all, are often contradictory or self-canceling when aggregated or misanalyzed. Yet, the unmet needs are apparent:

- The 1990 poverty rate for all Americans was 10%. For Hmong Americans it was 66%, 47% for Cambodian Americans, 67% for Laotian Americans and 34% for Vietnamese Americans.
- Asian American and Pacific Islander children living in Minnesota were three times as likely to live in poverty (37%) as compared to all children in Minnesota. Asian American and Pacific Islander children in Massachusetts were twice as likely to live in poverty (24%) as compared to all children in Massachusetts.
- Self-employed Vietnamese Americans only earned an average of \$14,000 a year.
- Less than 6% of Tongan Americans, Cambodian Americans, Laotian Americans and Hmong Americans have completed college.

...Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have often faced hardship, discrimination and injustice – think of the Japanese American interned during World War II, the Filipino veteran who fought for freedom, the Chinese immigrant barred from U.S. citizenship, the Vietnamese American hate crime victim, or the Indian American denied employment opportunities....let us not forget our continued struggle for racial tolerance and equality for all in our society.

In such a diverse community that traces its ancestry to hundreds of countries, ethnic groups and cultures, the challenges and needs of this population vary greatly. Sometimes these needs are masked by the overall success of the Asian Pacific American community, but we know the challenges are still there, such as language barriers for new immigrants, lack of education opportunity, no access to health care, or discrimination in employment. For Pacific Islanders historical and geographic barriers play a role in the lack of opportunities for this population.

For these reasons the Clinton-Gore Administration established through Executive Order the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, the first comprehensive federal effort to improve the quality of life for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

*Vice President Gore,
Statement for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month,
May 5, 2000.*



Community participants, Western Region Town Hall

- Filipino youth have one of the highest high school dropout rates and one of the highest rates of teen suicide ideation and attempts.
- Thirty percent of the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders living in New York City reside in overcrowded housing.
- The age-adjusted death rate for Native Hawaiians is 901 per 100,000, compared to 524 per 100,000 for the total U.S. population.

- Two million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders do not have health insurance, with Korean Americans having the highest rate of non-insurance among all racial/ethnic groups (40%).
- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have some of the highest rates of tuberculosis and hepatitis B in the U.S.
- The rate of liver cancer among Vietnamese Americans is 11 times higher than for Whites.

(U.S. Census Bureau, 1999 and 2000; Department of Health and Human Services, 1999; Urban Institute Metropolitan Housing and Communities Center, 2000).

The issues that this White House Initiative must address are often complex, with many subtle nuances set within specific cultural contexts. While broad federal and national policies are needed for Asian American and Pacific Islanders, it is vital that analyses and responses are localized, tailored and grounded in specific Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. Institutional and sustainable change and progress should occur at the local and community level in addition to departmental and agency headquarters.

WHAT WE HAVE HEARD AND LEARNED: INTERIM FINDINGS ON PRIORITY ISSUES

This Interim Report is the Commission's first impressions of what we have heard and learned since we were appointed in May 2000. This report cannot be and is not a comprehensive analysis of all the many critical issues and recommendations that have been so eloquently articulated by members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and the federal agencies. Therefore, the



Health & Human Services witnesses, Western Region Town Hall

Commission has identified and prioritized five crosscutting issues upon which to focus. We have extrapolated these issues from the community testimony we have heard, the site visits that we have made and the extensive background documentation that we have received and reviewed. The Commission has chosen to employ these crosscutting priorities rather than to focus on specific issues

such as health, education or economic development because of our mandate to improve the quality of life of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in a broad, comprehensive manner.

The Commission believes that this approach is more useful for achieving the goals of this White House Initiative and encourages all federal agencies, as well as the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, to maximize opportunities for comprehensive collaboration. The five crosscutting priority areas are:



Witnesses, Eastern Region Town Hall



- Improve data collection, analysis and dissemination for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders;

- Ensure access, especially linguistic access and cultural competence for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders;

- Protect civil rights and equal opportunity for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders;

- Strengthen and sustain Asian American and Pacific Islander community capacity;

- Recognize and include Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in federal programs and services.

IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION FOR ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Data drive almost all federal programs and services. Without specific, timely and accurate data about the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, federal programs and services may not be inclusive of or responsive to this population's needs and challenges. The absence or inadequacy of available data often excludes Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders from participation in federal programs and services. Many federal departments and agencies either do not collect the necessary data or collect incomplete data on the race and ethnicity of their consumers. Therefore, these agencies are unable to provide meaningful information on the needs and utilization of their programs and services by Asian

Americans and Pacific Islanders. One of the highest priorities of the Commission is to see the full implementation of the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standards for Maintaining, Collecting and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity. This policy requires all federal agencies to collect and report data by race and ethnicity by January 1, 2003.

The 1997 OMB Standards make two significant changes affecting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: 1) separating out "Asians" from "Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders" and 2) allowing respondents to designate more than one racial/ethnic category. Beyond the initial separation of data about Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders from Asian Americans, there is great need to collect, analyze and disseminate disaggregated data on the nearly 50 distinct, national origin and ethnic subgroups, and the over 100 language groups that are included in the broad category of Asian American and Pacific Islander. Without such further breakdown, or disaggregation, data are often misanalyzed or misleading, masking the important differences within the diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. We cannot achieve the mandate of this Executive Order unless we are able to identify the specific, underrepresented Asian

According to the 1990 Census, only 11% of Pacific Islanders had graduated from college, compared to 37% for all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and 20% of the total population. The per capita annual income of Pacific Islanders was \$10,342, much lower than the \$14,143 national average and \$13,638 for all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The poverty level was 17% for Pacific Islanders, as compared to 14% for all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. One out of every four Samoan and one out of every five Tongan families were below the poverty level. Native Hawaiians experience the most severe housing shortage out of any group in the nation.

Both the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities are severely hampered by the lack of data...Too often, we are dumped into [an] "other" [category]. Rarely is the ethnic category data provided. This is true whether we are talking about health, education, employment, housing, criminal justice or access to government programs. The lack of meaningful government data makes it difficult to track trends, identify problem areas, pinpoint solutions, and enforce civil rights.... If the Commission can compel the federal agencies to track, disclose, and analyze this data, you will have made a significant contribution to the ability of all stakeholders to ensure that the needs of our community are met.

*Karen Narasaki,
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium,
Washington, D.C.,
at Commission meeting,
May 17, 2000.*

American and Pacific Islander subgroups. All data about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders should be disaggregated for research, planning, funding and program implementation.

The Commission notes that even those federal departments and agencies that recognize this need to further disaggregate data regarding Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders generally do not do so, citing methodological and funding constraints. There are inadequate resources to support racially and ethnically disaggregated Asian American and Pacific Islander research and data activities with appropriate linguistic and cultural translations. The Commission encourages continued development and application of sampling, analytical and other methods to improve Asian American and Pacific Islander data. Finally, the Commission notes the importance of promoting research methodologies and researchers that are community-based, working in partnership with Asian American and Pacific Islander communities to collect, analyze and disseminate data. Improving data collection, analysis and dissemination about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders will ensure that federal programs and services are being implemented in the most responsive and effective manner in reaching all Americans.

ENSURE ACCESS, ESPECIALLY LINGUISTIC ACCESS AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE, FOR ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

The central goal of this White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders is to improve the quality of life of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by increasing their access to and participation in federal government programs where they are underrepresented. For Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, the two primary barriers to access and participation are the lack of linguistic access and cultural competence in government programs.



Simultaneous Interpretation at Western Region Town Hall

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders speak over one hundred languages and dialects. The 1990 Census reported that approximately 35% of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders live in linguistically-isolated households, where none of the individuals aged 14 years or older speak English "very well." These rates are very different for Asian American and Pacific Islander subgroups. For example, Southeast Asian refugees, Asian American immigrants and Pacific Islanders continue to face many barriers to both learning English as well as accessing programs and services in their primary languages. Support for both English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual education and training programs is needed.

Like other immigrant groups, most Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) eventually do learn English. However, it is vital that linguistic access to programs and services be available now. The

From my own personal experience, I can tell you that translating [on behalf of adults] is very difficult for children. They are often put down by the caseworkers, and they are made to feel guilty when they cannot translate appropriately. I had to translate for my mother since I was ten years old.

*Borey Heam,
Coalition Against Anti-Asian
Violence Southeast Asian
Community Project,
New York, NY
Eastern Regional Town Hall,
September 18, 2000.*

Commission supports Executive Order 13166, affirming that linguistic access to federal programs for individuals with LEP is required as a matter of equal access. This Executive Order, issued by President Clinton, directs all Federal agencies to set forth a plan to improve the language-accessibility of their programs by December 11, 2000. The Commission also commends the Department of Health and Human Services' policy guidance implementing the LEP Executive Order. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the Department of Justice in implementing the LEP Executive Order in all federal agencies.

The quality of translation and interpretation services should be standardized and evaluated; such services should be provided by qualified professionals with

appropriate compensation. Other methods of providing linguistic access, including outreach by Asian American and Pacific Islander community-based organizations and businesses and through Asian and Pacific Islander ethnic radio, print and television media should be expanded.

In addition, programs that provide ESL instruction and civics education should be expanded so immigrants can become full participants in our society. We commend the Clinton-Gore Administration for establishing the English Language/Civics Initiative to help states and communities provide LEP individuals with expanded access to quality English language instruction that is linked to civics and life skills instruction.



However, beyond linguistic access, there is a need for all federally-funded programs to be culturally competent. The Commission commends the leadership of the Department of Health and Human Services for its work on cultural competence, including its Office of Minority Health's development of proposed Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards. Few other federal agencies have focused on the need for cultural competence. The Commission encourages the continued development and application of cultural competence standards in all federal programs and services, including requirements for funding and review of funding applications.

Finally, it is vital that Asian American and Pacific Islander cultures be respected, preserved and perpetuated. Activities that promote and preserve our diverse Asian and Pacific Islander cultures and traditions can provide opportunities to reach Asian American and Pacific Islander communities more effectively. Meanwhile, it is critical that Asian and Pacific Islander cultures and histories are integrated in educational curricula and publicly-funded arts and cultural programs. Reducing linguistic and cultural barriers to access and participation while respecting and preserving Asian and Pacific Islander cultures and languages will help build a nation that capitalizes on America's diversity.

PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have historically suffered exclusion and discrimination. Asian American and Pacific Islander communities must be vigilant

in monitoring and preventing all forms of discrimination, hate crimes and racial profiling, fueled by negative stereotypes, especially about Asian Americans as perpetual "foreigners". In light of the plea



(l-r) Commissioners Choe, Leong, and Ho listen to community concerns.

...As Commissioners and community leaders, we must remain vigilant if we are to successfully fight discrimination, racial profiling, hate crimes and other challenges that continue to plague our communities to this day.

*Statement of Martha Choe, Chair,
President's Advisory Commission on Asian
Americans and Pacific Islanders,
September 18, 2000.*

agreement releasing Dr. Wen Ho Lee, the Commission has called on the Department of Justice to provide a full and comprehensive disclosure of the investigations and prosecutions of Asian American employees at the Department of Energy and in other national security positions. Recent efforts by President Clinton to preserve World War II internment sites which imprisoned more than 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry is an important step in assuring that this chapter in American history is not lost and that this kind of violation of civil liberties is not repeated.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders seek federal support in our collective efforts against crime and domestic violence. In addition, vigorous enforcement of labor laws is required to protect the rights, health and safety of Asian

American and Pacific Islander workers. Outreach, education and enforcement of civil rights laws should continue to be used to reduce employment discrimination and break through the "glass ceilings" for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in education and employment. Educational, training and professional development opportunities for



(l-r) Commissioners Dham, Cox and Caoile.

underrepresented Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders should be expanded.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders face discrimina-

tion based on age, gender, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. The administration of U.S. immigration laws, which plays a central role in the lives of many Asian American and Pacific Islander families and communities, must be fair and more efficient. The impact of welfare reform on

Asian American and Pacific Islander families should be analyzed. Additionally, the Commission supports the provision of full and equitable benefits to Filipino World War II veterans.

How might you feel if...you were isolated and dependent on your abuser because everyone around you spoke a language you did not understand? What would it be like if the very people meant to help you found your habits bizarre or exotic? Many of the approximately 300 battered women Manavi assists every year negotiate their lives with similar understandings of the world around them as impenetrable, intimidating, humiliating, unmanageable, and solitary.

*Shamita Das Dasgupta,
Manavi, Union, NJ,
at Eastern Regional Town
Hall,
September 18, 2000.*

As a transgendered Korean American adoptee, I do not have the luxury of separating issues of sexuality and gender identity from those of race, ethnicity, national origin and citizenship status.

*Pauline Park,
Gay Asian and Pacific Islander
Men of New York,
New York, NY,
at Eastern Regional Town Hall,
September 18, 2000.*

Environmental justice should be a top priority as Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, like other communities of color, continue to be targeted for military activities, dumping of toxins and overexposure to environmental hazards. Finally, barriers to increased civic participation by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders need to be addressed. Protecting the civil rights and ensuring equal opportunity for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders will help realize our nation's promise of justice and fairness for all.

STRENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY CAPACITY



(l-r) Ka Ying Yang, Vilay Chaleunrath, Commissioners Le and Guillermo.

Federal government and private sector support of Asian American and Pacific Islander community capacity and infrastructure is vital to increase the access and participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in federal programs and services. The Asian American and Pacific Islander communities have grown dramatically over recent decades, especially after 1965. Many Asian American and Pacific Islander communities are still relatively young.

Education and training, organizational development, leadership development, technical assistance, and access to and utilization of technolo-

gy, especially information technologies, are all critical strategic needs for Asian American and Pacific Islander communities to build effective public-private partnerships. Long-term, sustainable, economic and community development strategies and investments by the government and the private sector are critical for our communities. Federal government support of and coordination with territorial, state, local and indigenous government efforts in community and economic development focused on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are needed.

A federal designation of "Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions and Organizations," similar to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the Tribal Colleges and Universities and the Hispanic-Serving Institutions, could focus federal efforts and resources at key academic and community-based institutions to more effectively reach Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. These institutions could increase the effectiveness of recruitment, professional development, research, program development and program evaluation activities in the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. Public and private investments should also focus on strengthening the long-term capacity of such institutions.

...over two-thirds of Asian-owned businesses are self-employed businesses with no employees. Since self-employment or entrepreneurship is a prevalent and often a necessary and only means to achieve quality of life and sufficiency for many in the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, it is imperative that we commit ourselves to develop policies, identify and muster the resources, and put in place efforts to support and strengthen business and entrepreneurial development in our communities.

*Anthony Tri Tran
Union of Pan Asian
Communities
San Diego, CA,
at Western Regional Town
Hall,
July 24, 2000.*

We need government support for a lot more job training opportunities in our communities to help immigrant workers, especially immigrants with limited English skills.

*Yuk Chu Lee,
Local 23-25 UNITE,
New York, NY,
at Eastern Regional Town Hall,
September 18, 2000.*

By increasing partnerships between the federal government and existing community networks, the entrepreneurial experience and expertise of many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders can be mobilized as assets and resources for the greater benefit of all Americans.

RECOGNIZE AND INCLUDE NATIVE HAWAIIANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders - over half a million people - have often been relegated to a footnote or asterisk in discussions regarding Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Barely ever noted is the manner in which the United



Commissioner Leon Guerrero

States acquired Hawai'i, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa. Also neglected are the diverse and rich cultural traditions of the indigenous Pacific Islander peoples. This Commission will continue highlighting the importance of the political, economic and cultural self-determination of the Chamorros of Guam and the people of American Samoa. Issues of self-determination and the return of lands are priorities. Furthermore, the Commission is committed to continue working closely with other federal efforts such as the Interagency Group on Insular Areas, co-chaired by the Department of Interior and the White House Office of

Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Departments of Interior and Justice's activities supporting federal reconciliation with Native Hawaiians.

Reducing the vast disparities in health, education and income faced by Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders requires immediate attention. Finally, as political relationships between the federal government and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders continue to evolve, long-term issues of economic development, perpetuation of culture and community capacity building will emerge. Addressing the issues and needs of our indigenous Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander peoples will promote justice and equity for all.

Get to know our communities. It amazes me even today how little the federal government staff in Washington know who Pacific Islanders consist of.

*Robert Uhrle,
Advocate Initiatives for
Grassroots Access,
Daly City, CA,
at Western Regional Town Hall,
July 24, 2000.*

ESTABLISHING A BASELINE: FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

This White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders has engaged the participation of 32 federal departments and agencies (“agencies”) in focusing on the unmet needs of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Interagency Working Group meeting, Department of the Interior



Beginning in February 2000, 32 agencies began reviewing and assessing their programs and services and compiling data relevant to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. These cross-departmental

efforts were coordinated through the Interagency Working Group, chaired by Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Kevin Thurm (see Appendix B for Members of the Interagency Working Group), and the Coordinating Committee, co-chaired

by White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Executive Director Shamina Singh and Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of the Office of Public Liaison Laura Efurd (see Appendix C for Members of the Coordinating Committee).

To date, each participating federal department and agency has prepared: a) a Departmental Snapshot summarizing their mission, primary programs and services and their initial relevance for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; b) an extensive Inventory of their programs and services for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, including specific grants, loans and other funding focused on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as well as detailed employment data; and c) a Fiscal Year 2001 Plan that implements the goals of this White House Initiative. (See Appendix E for summaries of the federal department and agency responses). Each department and agency is beginning the implementation of their Fiscal Year 2001 plans and will soon be developing three-year implementation plans for this White House Initiative.

The federal inventories highlighted many activities; following are several examples:

- The Department of Health and Human Services has funded national and local Asian American and Pacific Islander community-based organizations, developed Asian and Pacific Islander language materials, developed materials on cultural competency, and continued to implement its Departmental Asian American and Pacific Islander Initiative. (Department of Health and Human Services, 2000).
- The Small Business Administration (SBA) has conducted outreach activities that involved over 24,000 Asian American and Pacific Islanders in order to

increase the amount of financing, technical assistance and government contracting assistance available. The SBA provided an unprecedented amount of financial assistance to Asian American and Pacific Islander small business in fiscal year 1999, totaling \$1.2 billion. (Small Business Administration, 2000).

- The Department of Agriculture has provided over \$26.5 million in loans and loan guarantees to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and has conducted successful outreach programs dealing with land and natural resource conservation, farming and fishing. (Department of Agriculture, 2000).
- The Environmental Protection Agency has undertaken numerous studies that assess the needs of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, and has developed extensive outreach strategies for informing these communities about environmental hazards, such as pesticides, air pollutants and tainted fish. (Environmental Protection Agency, 2000).



(l-r) Executive Director Singh, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Bill Lan Lee, Commerce Secretary Mineta, Attorney General Janet Reno, Carmen Mendez and Rose Ochi at the Department of Justice's Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month event.

- The Department of Justice has established a National Origin Working Group that promotes outreach and enforcement actions against discrimination based on national origin, including primary language. (Department of Justice, 2000).
- The U.S. Postal Service has conducted needs assessment studies, developed products and services for Asian American and Pacific Islanders, and provided financial sponsorship for partnerships with Asian American and Pacific Islander community organizations. (U.S. Postal Service, 2000).

- The Department of Energy has implemented significant outreach efforts to Asian American and Pacific Islander employees in order to address concerns based on the findings of a task force on racial profiling convened by Secretary Bill Richardson. (Department of Energy, 2000).

Based on the federal responses to the inventories, the Commission finds that:

- **Many federal agencies have engaged in outreach efforts to the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.**

Seven departments and ten agencies (53%) have a process in place to receive input from Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and Asian American and Pacific Islander community-based organizations.

- **Federal agencies have developed many types of partnerships with Asian American community-based organizations and businesses.**

-
- **Half of the federal agencies have an internal infrastructure to address Asian American and Pacific Islander-specific issues and needs.**

Seventeen of the 32 agencies (53%) have at least one Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff position that focuses specifically on Asian American and Pacific Islander issues. Nine departments and nine agencies (56%) have ongoing mechanisms for focusing on Asian American and Pacific Islander issues, such as advisory bodies and workgroups.

- **Few federal agencies have implemented the 1997 Office of Management and Budget Standards for Maintaining, Collecting and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity in their data collection and reporting about their programs and services.**

Only six departments and six agencies (36%) collect program data on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. (Note that full compliance with the 1997 OMB Standards is not required until January 2003.)

- **Most federal agencies do not have national or strategic plans to address the needs and issues of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.**

Prior to the current inventory, less than half of the agencies had conducted any needs assessments or studies within the last five years to identify, quantify or evaluate Asian American and Pacific Islander needs.

- **Federal funding for Asian American and Pacific Islander-specific projects and initiatives is inadequate relative to their needs and numbers in the general population.**

Only four departments and three agencies (22%) had grant programs in fiscal year 1999 for which Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were a funding priority.

- **A significant number of federal agencies do not provide consumer and program materials in Asian or Pacific Islander languages and do not collect data on the number of bilingual or multilingual employees in public contact positions.**

Eight departments and nine agencies (53%) have some informational materials translated in Asian and Pacific Islander languages. Only 25% of the agencies have regulations, policies or guidance memoranda on compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, ensuring equal access for individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

- **Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the federal workforce face a “glass ceiling” limiting promotions to senior, supervisory and managerial levels.**

Nineteen of the 29 agencies (66%) reporting employment data had Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders in Senior Executive Service (SES) positions. However, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are underrepresented in 28 of those 29 agencies (97%) reporting SES data. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are also underrepresented in supervisory levels at 23 of the 25 agencies (92%) reporting employment data about supervisory positions.

- **As it is not required by law, none of the federal agencies voluntarily collect employment data disaggregated by Asian American and Pacific Islander subgroups.**
- **Many federal agencies are committed to increasing the recruitment and supporting the promotion of more Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in their workforce.**

Nearly half of the agencies (47%) have an Asian American and Pacific Islander employee organization.

The Commission recognizes that these initial responses establish a baseline of federal government programs and services for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The agencies have provided unprecedented and extremely valuable data on their programs and staffing that will be critical in identifying resources and opportunities for increasing our communities’ participation in federal programs. Additionally, we note the diversity and breadth of the federal programs, services and funding opportunities that are available to our communities but that are so often unknown, not publicized, underutilized or have cultural, linguistic and other barriers to access and participation.



Secretary Shalala with leaders of Federal AAPI Employee Organizations

While this first attempt is commendable, it is evident that much more work can and should be done. We are particularly appreciative of the honesty with which many agencies admitted their historical shortcomings and pledged to do better to reach out to and include Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. It is the Commission’s expectation that the participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in federal programs and services will continue to increase as a direct result of this White House Initiative.

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS TO FEDERAL AGENCIES

Based on our preliminary review of the extensive testimony and information we have received from the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and the detailed federal agency responses, the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders makes the following interim recommendations to the federal agencies as they implement their Fiscal Year 2001 Plans and begin development of their Three Year Implementation Plans under the Executive Order:

INSTITUTIONALIZE EACH FEDERAL AGENCY'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS INITIATIVE

- **Adopt specific, measurable objectives related to this Initiative as part of each agency's Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) plans and objectives.**
- **Establish specific goals for increasing funding for Asian American and Pacific Islander programs and services.**
- **Support formalization of agencies' Asian American and Pacific Islander advisory bodies.**
- **Support formalization of agencies' Asian American and Pacific Islander employee organizations.**
- **Support designation and funding of staff positions dedicated to the implementation of this White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.**
- **Collect and analyze employee data further disaggregated by Asian American and Pacific Islander subgroups, pay and service levels, geographic location and gender; and develop and implement focused and coordinated recruitment, training, retention and promotion strategies to increase the number of underrepresented Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the federal workforce.**
- **Increase interagency coordination of Asian American and Pacific Islander activities.**
- **Institutionalize mechanisms to improve communication, collaboration and coordination between the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, the Office of the White**



(l-r) Commissioner Hayashi, Robin Toma, and Miya Iwataki

House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, the Interagency Working Group and the Coordinating Committee.

IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION FOR ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

- In order to meet the 2003 deadline, immediately formulate a plan to implement the 1997 Office of Management and Budget Standards in all federal data collection, analyses and dissemination.

- Conduct systematic review of all federal data collection instruments, and all sampling and analytical methods in order to maximize the inclusion of disaggregated Asian American and Pacific Islander subpopulations.

- Increase data collection, analyses and dissemination about under-represented Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

- Develop and implement ongoing mechanisms for identifying, training and funding Asian American and Pacific Islander researchers working with the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, including researchers at non-academic institutions.



Members of the Interagency Working Group at Western Region Town Hall

ENSURE ACCESS, ESPECIALLY LINGUISTIC ACCESS AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE, FOR ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS



Eastern Town Hall announcement in Pakistan Post (NY)

- Commit specific program and personnel resources to the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Executive Order 13166 increasing access for individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

- Identify and maximize the utilization of coordinated federal and community resources for culturally competent translation and interpretation.

- Develop and use multiple formats and media to increase linguistic access.

- Increase utilization of Asian and Pacific Islander language radio, print and television media for community outreach and education.



*Rep. Robert Underwood,
Chair, Congressional Asian
Pacific American Caucus,
testifying at Eastern
Region Town Hall*

- **Commit research and programmatic resources to develop standards and implement cultural competence in all programs and services.**
- **Include consideration of linguistic access and cultural competence in all federal funding and reviews of funding applications.**
- **Increase the participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders on all federal grant review panels.**
- **Proactively seek and create opportunities to integrate and preserve Asian and Pacific Islander cultures in all programs and services where appropriate.**

PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

- **Address issues of racial profiling against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by law enforcement; provide full disclosure and accounting of the investigations and prosecutions of Asian American employees at the Department of Energy and in other national security positions.**
- **Support enforcement and strengthening of hate crimes legislation and ensure vigorous monitoring and prosecution of violations of federal civil rights laws.**
- **Support domestic violence prevention and service programs focused on Asian American and Pacific Islander women, children and elders.**
- **Proactively enforce equal employment opportunity, wage and hour and occupational health and safety laws.**
- **Increase access to federal education and training programs and increase federal support for bilingual and other educational programs that support Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.**
- **Ensure that Asian American and Pacific Islander women are included in all relevant programs and services and have equal**



*Department of Health and Human
Services Deputy Secretary Kevin
Thurm and Executive Director
Shamina Singh at the Huong Viet
Community Center youth pro -
gram, Oakland, CA.*

opportunities for access and participation.

- Proactively reduce barriers to participation in federal programs and services by persons with disabilities.
- Include issues of sexual orientation and gender identity in diversity activities and nondiscrimination efforts as well as in the administration of federal programs and services.



(l-r) Commissioners Patel, Titilii Abbot, and Ho

- Improve customer service, reduce delays and address inequities in the administration of U.S. immigration laws.
- Analyze the impacts of the welfare and immigration reform laws of 1996.
- Ensure the provision of full and equitable benefits to Filipino American World War II veterans.

- Support the provision of bilingual ballots and other methods for increasing civic participation among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

STRENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY CAPACITY

- Increase outreach, education and funded partnership agreements with Asian American and Pacific Islander community-based organizations and businesses.
- Increase coordination of Asian Americans and Pacific Islander programs for minorities, women, the disabled, veterans, and small business interests.
- Fund targeted technical assistance programs that increase the participation of Asian American and Pacific Islander community-based organizations in federal grant programs.
- Support the organizational development and sustainability of Asian American and Pacific Islander community-based organizations and businesses.
- Support housing development and promotion of home ownership in Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.



Community roundtable, Oakland, CA.

- Reduce the “digital divide” for underrepresented Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, especially individuals with lower incomes, lower literacy and Limited English Proficiency.
- Establish a designation of “Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions and Organizations” as the focus for outreach, recruitment, research and program development, implementation and evaluation activities.

RECOGNIZE AND INCLUDE NATIVE HAWAIIANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



Commissioners Titilii Abbot and Apoliona with Pacific Islander community leaders

- Continue coordination of this Initiative with other federal initiatives and activities focused on Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.
- Support reconciliation with Native Hawaiians.
- Support the self-determination of Chamorros and Samoans.

- Support the return of lands held by the U.S. government and military to Native Hawaiians and the people of Guam.
- Improve the collection, analyses and dissemination of data about Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders while respecting Pacific Islander cultures.
- Reduce the housing, health, education and economic disparities among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.
- Support capacity-building activities for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities both in the Pacific Islands and in the continental U.S.
- Support the perpetuation and integration of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander cultures in all relevant federal programs and services.
- Reduce the “digital divide” for Pacific Islanders.



CONCLUSION: A PEOPLE LOOKING FORWARD

...let me repeat what I tell all audiences representing underserved populations. This is not a zero-sum game. Neither this Executive Order - nor any other action taken by the federal government - will come at the expense of other groups. Our responsibility is to make the pie bigger for everyone - not the pieces smaller. I don't consider this simply an administrative or legal obligation. This is a moral obligation - and good government. Groups that have for too long been on the outside looking in, who for too long have been denied full access to the American dream, must not now be asked to compete with each other. That is unacceptable. We need a new standard that says: we will do what needs to be done for all Americans.

*Department of Health and
Human Services Deputy
Secretary Kevin Thurm,
Co-Chair, Interdepartmental
Working Group,
to Federal Asian Pacific
American Council
National Leadership Training
Conference,
May 10, 2000.*

The goal of the Executive Order is to improve the quality of life for all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders but particularly for those that have been underrepresented and overlooked. As a Commission, we specifically recognize some members of our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities who often have been ignored and marginalized, both by our own communities as well as general American society. We have heard your calls for recognition and inclusion in this effort to improve the quality of life for all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

To our indigenous Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander brothers and sisters, we fully support your self-determination and reconciliation, while urgently seeking a greater commitment and investment by the federal government to address the many health, education, housing and economic disparities that you continue to experience.

To our immigrant and refugee Asian American and Pacific Islander sisters and brothers, we welcome your full participation in our nation's life while committing to reducing the linguistic, cultural and social barriers to access and equal opportunity. In particular, we recognize the many economic contributions made by Asian American and Pacific Islander immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, and seek vigorous enforcement of all laws to protect you from discrimination and exploitation.

To all Asian American and Pacific Islander women, we honor the roles that you play in

all aspects of the economy, our families and communities, often at the cost of your own health and well-being. We want to challenge the particular and persistent inequities that you face in our families, in education, and in employment and business opportunities, both in our own Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and in American society in general.

To our multiracial Asian American and Pacific Islander sisters and brothers, we pledge to work with you in defining and refining our societal notions of racial and ethnic identity, to ensure your inclusion and representation in all our discussions of what it means to be Asian American or Pacific Islander. You are an



important bridge to overcome some of the barriers and divisions among all Americans. To Asian American and Pacific Islander intercountry adoptees, we are committed to assisting you in your journeys to claim your birth identities and heritage and to help build bridges between families, cultures, races and nationalities.

To our Asian American and Pacific Islander brothers and sisters with disabilities, we are committed to work with you to eliminate the barriers, both physical and attitudinal, to your full participation in all our communities and in all federal programs. You are entitled to these basic civil and human rights.

To Asian American and Pacific Islander survivors and victims of domestic violence, we challenge all of us to do more to break the silence around domestic violence and ensure that comprehensive, linguistically accessible and culturally competent services are available to you and your families.

To our Asian American and Pacific Islander gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender sisters and brothers, we want to explicitly recognize your presence and contributions and join you in condemning and changing the ignorance and prejudice that keep you invisible, threaten your physical, mental and emotional health and deny all of us your talents and gifts. We reject all forms of discrimination and exclusion because of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

To our Asian American and Pacific Islander elders and seniors, we honor all that you have sacrificed and risked for our families and ourselves. We seek to ensure that your lives are lived with a sense of security and respect. We will continue to celebrate the proud legacy of our ancestors.

To our Asian American and Pacific Islander youth, we recognize both the pressures and the opportunities that you face as our collective hope for the future. We acknowledge the very real, daily stress of growing up in today's world, often torn between the traditional values and cultures of your parents and grandparents and the rapidly changing, increasingly technological, modern world. Our work as a Commission is in large part inspired by our commitment to doing what we can to ensure that your futures are ones in which your highest aspirations and loftiest dreams are realized.

And to our Asian American and Pacific Islander veterans, we express our gratitude for your service and sacrifice to our nation and we join with you to express our loyalty and pride in public service while demanding equity in all veterans' programs and services. We honor you as living examples of the best of American patriots.

We call upon our own Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and the federal departments and agencies to recognize and include all our sisters and brothers as we all work together to build a better future for all of America.

As the first Presidential Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, we are acutely aware of our obligations to our families and our communities to translate what we have heard and learned into recommendations that will result in meaningful, measurable and sustainable programmatic changes that increase access for and participation by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in federal government programs and services. As a Presidential Advisory Commission, we will proactively and aggressively use the platform created by this White House Initiative to inform, educate and advocate about the critical issues and needs as well as the valuable assets and resources in our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.



Laura Efurud (center), Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Director, White House Office of Public Liaison, with the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

However, as pervasive and persistent as our communities' needs are, we resist and reject a "deficit model" that requires us to identify and document our needs and problems, only to compete with others who are marginalized for scarce and shrinking resources. Instead, we proudly assert our community strengths and assets, and a sense of community empowerment to share in the solutions to our needs and concerns. At the same time, we invite the federal government to partner with our communities to maximize resources and to increase both the effectiveness and efficiency of federal government programs and services. We will continue to rely on the assistance, cooperation and partnership of both the federal government and the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in making the promise of this White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders a reality.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many individuals who contributed to the success of the first White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. We are grateful to President Clinton for his leadership in signing Executive Order 13125 and highlighting our Asian American and Pacific Islander Initiative as part of his vision for "One America."

We also thank Vice President Gore as well as current and former White House officials who worked so hard to make this Commission's work possible: Irene Bueno, Mary Beth Cahill, Barbara Chow, Maria Echaveste, Laura Efurd, Olga Garcia, Maria Haley, Doris Matsui and Wei-Min Wang.

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Much of our work could not have happened without the vital partnership we established with the Federal Interagency Working Group and Coordinating Committee and with the many national, regional and local representatives of federal agencies. These entities have hosted and accompanied us at our community town hall meetings and have provided financial, logistical and in-kind support. In addition, we acknowledge the important support that the Asian American and Pacific Islander federal employee organizations provided to this effort. We also received considerable support from the members and staff of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, chaired by the Honorable Robert A. Underwood.

Hundreds of individuals and organizations from the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities provided the Commission with testimony and background materials. We sincerely thank them for the incredible resources they provided to the Commission and for continuing to inspire our efforts and motivate our work. We also appreciate Bill Imada and his staff at Imada Wong Communications Group for their logistical and technical assistance in coordinating our regional community town hall meetings.

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